

Appl. No. 10/042,748
Amdt. dated August 11, 2003
Reply to Office action of May 9, 2003

Amendments to the Specification:

Please replace paragraph [0008] with the following amended paragraph:

[0008] One aspect of the present invention is to lower the noise level generated by the snowmobile track while rotating by mixing clip sequences on each row of clipping sites so as to lower the overall noise level generated by the track while rotating. Each clip sequence comprises one or more successive clips and one or two successive clipping sites without a clip.

Please replace paragraph [0012] with the following amended paragraph:

a1 [0012] FIG. 2 is a transversal ~~cross-sectional~~ side view taken from line ~~[[II-II]]~~ 2-2 in FIG. 1.

Please add the following new paragraph after paragraph [0012]:

a2 [0012.1] FIG. 3 is a detailed view taken from enclosure 3 taken from FIG. 1.

Please add the following new paragraph after paragraph [0012.1]:

a3 [0012.2] FIG. 4 is a transversal cross-sectional view taken from line 4-4 in FIG. 3.

Please replace paragraph [0014] with the following amended paragraph:

a4 [0014] As shown in FIGS. 1 and 2, the track comprises an endless body (12) made of a reinforced rubber material with longitudinally spaced and transversely disposed stiffeners (~~not shown~~ 14) embedded in the rubber material. The body defines a central band portion (20) and opposite lateral band portions (22,24) that are located on the sides of the central band portion (20). Between each lateral band portion (22) and the central band portion (20) is located a suspension bearing portion (26) which comprises a plurality of holes (28). Each hole (28) is located between two successive stiffeners.

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Please replace paragraph [0015] with the following amended paragraph:

a5
[0015] The body (12) of the track (10) has a ground-engaging outer side that is provided with a tread pattern ([28] 29). The tread pattern ([28] 29) is repeated uniformly over the entire length of the track (10). The tread pattern ([28] 29) comprises a plurality of projecting traction lugs (30) disposed on the central band portion (20), on the lateral band portions (22,24) or both. The traction lugs (30) have typically between 3/4 and 3 inches. The width of the central band portion (20) is typically in the range of 5 to 10 inches, with a preferred value of 6 1/2 inches when the total width of the track (10) is 15 inches.

Please replace paragraph [0016] with the following amended paragraph:

a6
[0016] The proximal edges of two successive holes (28) of a same suspension bearing portion (26) and the inner side of the track (20) underneath the corresponding stiffener between the two successive holes (28) define a clipping site (32). The track (10) comprises a plurality of clips (40) that are mounted in an arrangement of mixed clip sequences. Each clip sequence comprises one or more successive clips (40) immediately followed by one or two successive clipping sites without a clip (40). In use, because of the mixed clip sequences, the overall noise level generated by the track (10) is lowered since the same clipping sequence does not pass under the runners at every increment in the rotation of the track (10). Omitting clips also have the advantage of reducing the total weight of the track (10) and the manufacturing costs thereof.

Please replace paragraph [0017] with the following amended paragraph:

a7
[0017] Preferably, each clip sequence comprises between one and eight successive clips (40) immediately followed by one or two successive clipping sites without a clip (40). More preferably, there is provided between one and six successive clips immediately followed by one or two successive clipping sites without a clip (40). A small number of successive clips (40) is preferred since it provides more varied sequences over the entire track (10). Another factor is that a small number of successive clips (40) has a great visual impact to the potential

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buyers of the tracks (10), which might otherwise think that a track (10) is defective since some clips are missing at few locations.

Please replace paragraph [0020] with the following amended paragraph:

48 [0020] where C represents a clip and X represents a site without a clip.

Please replace paragraph [0022] with the following amended paragraph:

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[0022] There are two main kinds of clips (40). ~~[[The]]~~ As shown in Figure 4, the first is the L-shaped clip (42), which comprises a side flange (43) that slide against the side of the runners. The other is the flat clip (44), which is essentially similar to the L-shaped clip (42) but does not comprise a flange. A track (10) according to the present invention and illustrated in Figure 3 preferably comprises flat clips (44) in addition to the standard L-shaped clips (42). However, when using flat clips (44), one L-shaped clip (42) should be at least provided at any four successive clipping sites with or without clips. This ensures a proper guidance to the track (10) so that the track (10) does not become misaligned with the runners, thereby causing an intense friction. Using a mix of flat clips (44) and L-shaped clips (42), in addition to the clipping sites without a clip, provide an improve variation of the clipping pattern.

Please replace paragraph [0023] with the following amended paragraph:

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[0023] The present invention also provides a method of mounting clips (40) on a track (10). The method is characterized in that it comprises the steps of determining an arrangement of mixed clip sequences for each row of clipping sites so as to lower the overall noise level generated by the track (10) while rotating. Each clip sequence comprises one or more successive clips and one or two successive clipping sites without a clip. Thereafter, the clips are mounted at designated clipping sites.